



Getting children ready for school.

Rev. Willie J. Heegins

Executive Director:

Sonia Elise Gass

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Total children in county under age 6: 7,395

Total Children in county living in poverty: 13.5%

Orangeburg County Highlights

- QEG – 3 centers assisted
- Scholarships - 44 granted
- PAT - 76 children assisted
- PAT - 70 parents assisted
- Training - 30 Childcare Centers

Orangeburg County

First Steps Partnership

Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

During fiscal year 2008-09, Orangeburg County First Steps (OCFS) continued work toward ensuring that all the children in our county arrive to the first grade ready to learn. Through programs that the OCFS board had implemented to remove barriers, we served 388 children and 194 adults. There were eighty-one (81) staff members from thirty (30) child care facilities who received training instruction and technical assistance on various subjects during the year with over three-hundred (300) children attending these facilities; the parent educators made 936 home visits; the 4K Expansion Program established 21 4-K slots; and 1,397 books were distributed through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program.

According to 2005 South Carolina data, Orangeburg boasts a population of 89,952 people, with 7,395 children under the age of six. 13.5 % or 998 of these children live in poverty (family of four earning less than \$10,325), 2,043 (40%) are under the age of six and lived in a single-parent household and the majority of these parents do not have a high school diploma. Seventy-four (74) babies were born to parents under the age of eighteen (18). 2005 data indicated that 18% of pregnant women were uninsured and 36% had no prenatal care. With an average, annual household income for these (single) parents of less than \$15,000; it was determined that many parents did not seek quality childcare for their children because of the high cost. Research also indicates that thirty-four percent (34%) of the children entering first grade test not ready, nineteen percent (19%) will fail the third grade and forty-four percent (44%) in the 8th grade will not graduate.

The Orangeburg County First Steps board took all these factors into consideration when choosing the 2008-2009 programs that will remove barriers and promote school readiness.

With your support, Orangeburg County First Steps will build educational foundations on which our children will grow and succeed.

Sincerely,

First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas

The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:

Family Strengthening: A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

Healthy Start: Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

Quality Child Care: Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

Early Education: Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

School Transition: The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

2008-09 County Partnership Programs by Strategy

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Parents as Teachers:

Program description: The Parents as Teachers (PAT) program is designed to provide parents with access to the support they need to strengthen their families and promote the optimal development of preschool students. The program goals were to fund two Parent Educators, ensure that each parent educator visit twenty (20) families twice a month, to provide parenting education and skills training, and to have parent educators conduct group meetings, screenings and organize a resource network. Through this program, Orangeburg County First Steps sought to: improve knowledge of parenting skills using the Ages and Stages curriculum, improve parent participation in various activities, and increase the parent educator training.

Program Results:

- Two (2) Parent Educators made visits to 62 Adults and 71 Children
- Using the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) which measures parent child interaction in various situations to assess parental skill level. This test indicated that parent interaction is not at the level desired by OCFS. However, the Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI) results showed an improvement in both the children and the adult reading activities.
- Parents are continuing to learn how to help prepare their children for a lifetime of learning according to the test results, but there are still some areas that need improvement.
- As in previous years, this program works with other services offered by Orangeburg County First Steps such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, the Quality Enhancement Grant program and the Scholarship program. Parents enrolled in the Parents as Teachers Program also receive child care scholarship so that their children may attend OCFS certified learning centers. Each child under the age of five also receives a free book a month.
- Through this program, over 336 referrals have been made to agencies such as BabyNet, One Stop Workforce Investment Act, DHEC, DSS, and Adult Education at Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College.
- Fifty-nine (59) children in this program received books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Thirteen (13) individuals are enrolled in the GED
- One (1) enrolled in OC TECH
- Six (6) finished High School
- Three (3) in high school
- Three (3) received a HS certificate
- Nine Hundred-Ninety Six (936) home visits were made

QUALITY CHILD CARE

Quality Enhancement Grant

Program description: Through the quality enhancement grant program, Orangeburg County First Steps continues to strive to accomplish the following goals: 1) to improve the overall quality of child care offered in Orangeburg County; 2) to improve the qualifications of individuals working in child care centers; 3) to improve the knowledge and skills of child care workers regarding early childhood growth and development; and 4) to improve the number of children leaving child care testing ready for the first grade.

Program Results:

- This program impacted an average of 110 children.
- Eighteen (18) OCFS Quality Enhancement Grant (QEG) staff members received training in several areas and also received personalized technical assistance
- Sixty-three (63) other staff members were also trained.
- This program showed an average improvement of 6% in the areas associated with preparing children for the first grade
- \$11,341.00 in supplies were purchased for the three centers involved in the QEG program. These funds were used to assist them in reaching the next level of certification. The materials also helps them to provide an environment where every child has the opportunity to be ready for the first grade

TRAINING

Program Description: The goals of this strategy are to provide free training to all child care center owners, operators and employees. Orangeburg County First Steps assesses the needs of the centers to determine the topics present. Each center receives a flier listing each the trainings, dates and how to register. Centers participating in the OCFS Quality Enhancement program are given the opportunity to register first, and then registration is open to other centers in the county.

Program results:

- Eight (8) trainings were conducted
- Eighty-one (81) child care workers and program directors attended the trainings provided at no cost to the attendees
- The child care workers represented 18 centers
- Each training is accredited for Department of Social Service hours toward staff certification
- The trainings were on topics determined by surveying the participants. They were
 - Curriculum Training
 - Supporting Children Learning and Development Interest
 - Mandated Reporting
 - Blood Borne Pathogen
 - Abuse and Neglect Program Administration
 - Programs for School age Children
 - Curriculum Training
 - Child Development Standards

SCHOLARSHIPS

Program description: The goals of this strategy are to: make available approximately forty (40) child care scholarships available for children who meet the ABC Child Care eligibility criteria, increase the number of parents receiving support to strengthen their families, increase the number of children receiving comprehensive services, reduce the number of risk factors being identified through early intervention and, increase the number of children enrolled in quality preschool programs.

Program Results:

- Fifty (50) full time scholarships and five (5) partial scholarships were granted during this fiscal year
- Scholarship recipients were placed in Orangeburg County First Steps approved child care centers so that the children would have the opportunity to arrive to school ready to learn, by benefiting from the training provided by OCFS
- Monitoring visits were made to ensure that the children were attending child care regularly and were receiving age-appropriate instruction

EARLY EDUCATION.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Program description: The goals of this strategy are to: provide a book a month for all children under the age of five in Orangeburg County, increase the number of children with access to books, increase the developmental preparedness of the children in Orangeburg County, increase the knowledge and skills of children and, increase parent participation in reading activities.

Program Results:

- 1,397 books were distributed
- Pre and Post surveys results indicated that the parents were reading more to their children as a result of this program
- Over \$5,000 was raised to support this program

S.C. Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)

Program Description: CDEPP offers state-paid tuition of 4-year-old kindergarten classes to eligible students living in the thirty-seven (37) trial and plaintiff school districts involved in the school funding equity lawsuit, *Abbeville et al. vs. South Carolina*. First Steps oversees CDEPP 4K classes offered in non-public school environments. To qualify for state-paid tuition, a student's family must qualify for TANF or free/reduced-price lunch, be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2008, and live in an eligible school district.

Program results:

- Twenty (21) students served
- Three providers offered CDEPP 4K classes
 - Happy Land CDC
 - South Carolina State University CDLC
 - Kids in Motion

<u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>)	\$ 308,365.00
E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>)	29,908.00
Lottery Appropriation (<i>Fund 35</i>)	0.00
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 60</i>)	66,848.00
C.O.E. Appropriation (<i>Fund 65</i>)	0.00
N.F.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 70</i>)	0.00
State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>)	6,712.00
Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>)	26,463.00
Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>)	32,732.00
In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>)	37,972.00
Carry Forward (11)	7,999.00
TOTAL:	\$516,999.00

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name	
EIA allocation	\$ 29,908.00
Carry Forward	7,999.00
State Private Funds	6,712.00
Local Private	26,463.00
Parents as Teachers	66,462.00
Child Quality Enhancement	50,694.00
Child Care Training	40,119.00
Scholarships	29,213.00
CDEPP – 4K	63,417.00
CDEPP Admin	3,431.00
In-kind Donations	37,972.00
Federal Grants	32,732.00
Indirect Programmatic Functions	83,707.00
Administrative Functions	38,170.00
TOTAL:	\$516,999.00

CLARIFICATION(s)

1. None Needed
- 2.
- 3.

NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
Anonymous	\$ 2,419.98
Anthony Williams	295.00
Bertie Howard	200.00
Carolyn Williams	210.00
Cox Wood Preserving	200.00
Dollar General	1,000.00
Gerald Harrison	270.00
Husqvarna	500.00
James Jeffries	545.00
Jamison Pharmacy	1600.00
Kaplan	500.00
Little Lambs	250.00
Marline Welch	200.00
OCSD#3	800.00
Okonite Corp	250.00
Richard Martino	200.00
Sam Williams	200.00
SC Community Bank	250.00
SCSCU	500.00
St. James-Gaillard Elem	270.00
TRMC	1,000.00
Walmart	1,000.00
Willie J. Heggins	600.00
Wright Way	350.00
TOTAL:	\$13,609.98

Only donations \$200 and above are listed.

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 30%
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Board Category</i>
1	Anderson, Romaine	Parent of Preschool Child
2	Artis, Marie Hemberg	ECE
3	Brailey, Queen	Legislative App
4	Brunson, Deborah	OCSD#3 App
5	Bryant, Sonya	DSS Appointee
6	Dawkins-Glover, Ayanna	Parent of Preschool Child
7	Fields, Jay	Parent of Preschool child
8	Glover, Albertha	Family Education, Training & Support Provider
9	Garrick, Martha	OCSD#4
10	Gramling, Katherine	DHEC
11	Green, Brenda	Transportation Provider
12	Hailey, Edna - Assistant Secretary	Pre-K Primary Educator
13	Heggins, Willie - Board Chair	Faith
14	Henderson, Matthew	Legislative Appointee
15	Howard, Bertie - Secretary	Head Start
16	Irick, Earline	Library
17	Jeffries, James - Treasurer	Health Care
18	Jenkins, Janice	Transportation Provider
19	Johnson, Minnie	Child Care/ECD Education Pro
20	Littlejohn, Shelia M.	Child Care/ECD Education Pro
21	Murdaugh, Johnnie	Business
22	Reed, Trese	Early Childhood Education
23	Richardson, Demier - Vice Chair	Non-Profit Organization
24	Saxon, Ione	OCSD#5
25	Shaw, Jackie	Legislative App
26	Steadman, Vivian	Senate Appointee
27	Stokes, Ola M.	Pre-K Educator
28	Watson, George - Chaplain	Faith
29	White, Barbara	Non-Profit Organization
30	Williams, Carolyn	ECE

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

After carefully reviewing our data and determining that the previously implemented programs are working, Orangeburg County First Steps chose continue with the programs during the 2008-2009 fiscal year. This was done in hopes of removing barriers which might prevent children from learning. Since implementing these programs more children and parents are benefiting from early intervention, more centers are being impacted and four-year olds are receiving the opportunity to attend kindergarten.

Noting that parents were unable to afford quality child care, OCFS awarded fifty-five scholarships. In an effort to ensure that the children of Orangeburg County are being prepared for the first grade, OCFS provided training to eighty-one (81) instructors on eight (8) subject areas, impacting over 300 Pre-Kindergarten students. Knowing that the parent is the child's first and best teacher, OCFS made nine hundred and ninety six (996) home visits to help parents prepare their children for a lifetime of learning. Finally, knowing the importance of reading, OCFS distributed 1,397 books through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.

We have established partnerships with local agencies and are able to provide more and better services because of these collaborations. Our FY 2010 plans are to continue these services and improve in any area that demonstrated a weakness. Our vision is to have every child in Orangeburg County ready for the first grade, and we will continue to self-evaluate to ensure we are reaching this goal.

June 2, 2009

My name is Shalynn Ladson, and I am nineteen years of age. I have been involved with the Family Literacy Program for almost two years. I have a twenty-two month old son named Tre'ven. My Parent Educator's name is Ms. Terry. Tre'ven and I enjoy Ms. Terry's visits. She enjoys reading to Tre'ven and giving him different books during her visits. I read to Tre'ven every night before he goes to bed. The program has taught me to be a better parent to my child. I enjoy the materials Ms. Terry shares with us. I also enjoy attending the group meetings. The topics are very interesting and very helpful. Being a teen mom can be very stressful and my parent educator helps me to deal with a lot of stressful situations. Ms. Terry has helped me with housing, jobs, and daycare vouchers. Because of this program I can work and my child can attend a good daycare center. This is a good program for all teen mothers who need to work or go back to school. I tell all of my friends about the program.

Thanks,
Shalynn Ladson
Shalynn Ladson

I like being in the being the
program. I really help the kids.
They really learn a lot of stuff.
They really enjoy being in the
program because they help you
with your ABC's and they
help them get ready for
school. That why I like for
my kids to be in the program
Sincerely Kendra
March 31, 2009

June 2, 2009

My Name is Kiare Felder and I am nineteen years of age. I have been involved with the Family Literacy/Parenting Program for almost two years. I have a two-year old daughter name Ke'Asia. Ke'Asia and I have really benefit from the Family Literacy Program in so many ways. Since I've been involved with the program my Parent Educator Ms. Terry has worked intensely with my daughter and me. She has made numerous home visits to my home. She has exposed my daughter and me to a variety of books. My daughter has developed a love for books. She receives books monthly because she is a part of the Orangeburg County First Steps Imagination Library. Ke'Asia enjoys receiving her books through mail. The Parenting Program has helped me became a better parent to my child. Ms. Terry has taught me parenting skills and early childhood developmental skills. She has also assisted me in going back to school to receive my GED through the Adult Education program. I am so grateful for being a part of this program. I also recommend all of my friends to enroll into this program because the program encourages me to be a better parent to my child and instill the importance of education for my child and myself.

Thank You,

Kiara Felder

Kiara Felder

The Teen parents
Program!!!

March 31, 09

I have learn so much while I'm in this program. I also have attend every session, never miss one. It's always excitement and fun. We play games, have a speaker come in and talk to us about certain things and we also eat. My Home Teacher is Mrs. Glover, and she's very nice, outgoing, and loyal. She's also a very understanding person.

I love recieving the book for my child every month, because that helps him out alot, by pointing things out, learning his colors, and learning how to say different words. so I really enjoy being in the program.

Byo hashay flood

My name is Lara Brown and I attend the First Step Program. I have two kids and we really enjoy being part of the program. The staff and my parent educators are very good to us. We also learn about all different ways to care for our children and take care of ourselves.

3-31-09

Lara Brown

3.30.09

With Mrs. Glover's help and the help of the programs she direct me to such as One stop and OCTECH. I was able to take the tabe test, Find out about jobs that I was searching for in my feild, Find out about programs that will train me in any feild of work. Start school at OCTECH but unfortunately I had to leave tech un-finished because of transportation reasons.

I also was able to learn how to read to my Children in a fun way. Not just read to them but ways to insure they understand the story and are following you as well.

My family and I also was given many invites to programs they had at New Vision. The programs there

helped my Children and I
interact with others and
also help us learn from
each other. I have really
enjoyed this program and
Mrs. Glovers help.

Whaleia Felder
3.30.09

3-30-09

Every year I try to set goals that I want to achieve. One of my goals for last year was buy me a car. I bought a car it wasn't a new car but it was new to me it put me down.

My next goal was to go to school to get my high school diploma/ G.E.D. I enroll in school but only went for a little while because my car put me down so I didn't have a ride and gas was too high. My other goal was to get my own house. I'm looking for a 3 or 4 bed room with 1 or 2 bathroom. Mrs. Cyler is helping me to achieve my goals when I need the help. I kinda like working with Mrs. Cyler because she act like she care about helping us young women that need help.

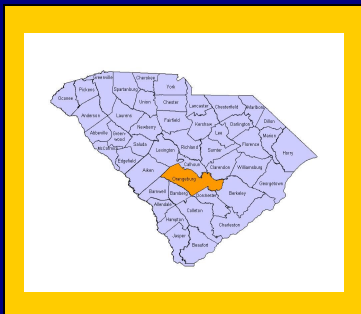
Saneaka Brown

The SC General Assembly created in 1999 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative as a “comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through county partnerships, public and private funds and support for high quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to learn” ...here’s what happened next:

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parents as Teachers program has collaborated with all three school districts to impact over 260 children
Quality Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received a \$32,000 grant from the SC Children’s trust fund to improve Child Abuse and Prevention awareness
Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over \$8,000 raised to support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program
School Transition Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with the school districts to provide funding for over 50 students to participate in the Countdown to Kindergarten program. The school districts contributed \$5,500 to participate in this program

Other notable moments:

- ❖ Hosted Annual Meeting called First Steps Day at the Mall with over 1,800 individuals attending and thirty vendors participating
- ❖ Hosted First Steps Education Extravaganza and raised over \$26,000
- ❖ Recognized as Orangeburg Young Professional of the Month
- ❖ Recognized as Orangeburg Citizen of the Month
- ❖ Seven volunteers (beside board members) contributed over 300 hours



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Orangeburg County

Total Children Under Six: 7,395

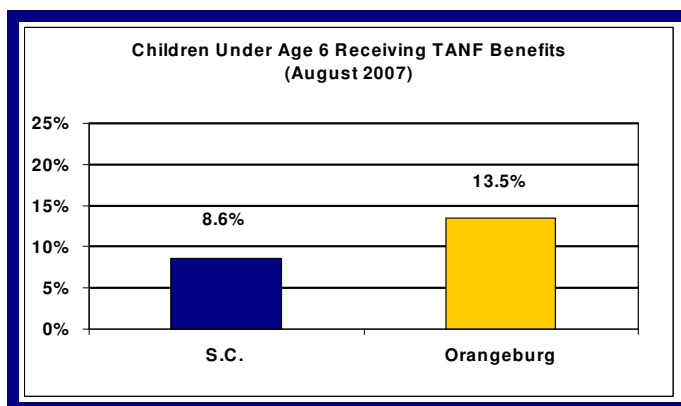
CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Orangeburg County (2007): 13.5%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 8 Orangeburg County children has an annual family income equivalent to \$10,325 (or less) for a family of four. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 45% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Children in deep poverty often face a wide variety of school readiness obstacles, ranging from inadequate prenatal care and nutrition to low maternal education.
- 995 of Orangeburg County’s 7,395 children under 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.



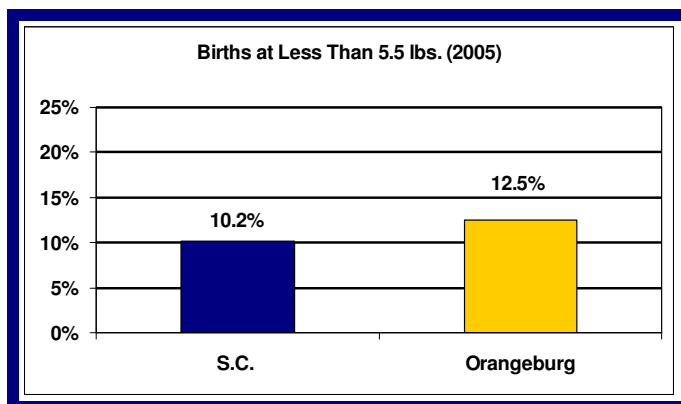
CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Orangeburg County (2005): 12.5%

Fast Fact: 1 in 8 Orangeburg County children is born at a weight less than 5.5 lbs. A recent statewide analysis suggests that at least one third of these children (36%-52% depending on weight category) will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Babies born at low weights are often prone to developmental delays associated with early academic failure.
- Many have received inadequate prenatal care and suffer from significant health complications.
- 169 of the 1,354 children born in Orangeburg County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



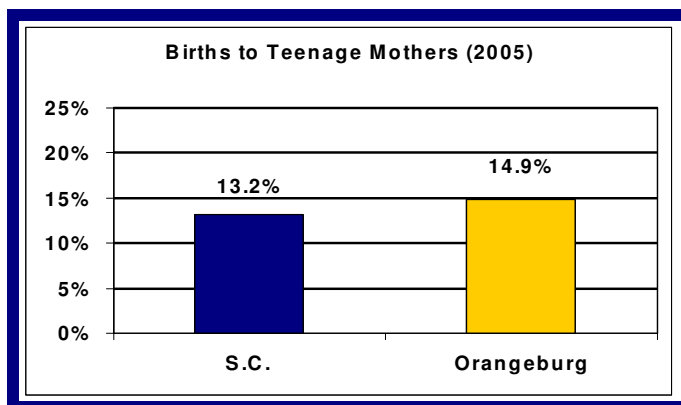
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Orangeburg County (2005): 14.9%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 7 Orangeburg County births is to a mother under 20 years of age. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 43% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Teenage parents often lack the maturity and knowledge required to optimally fulfill important parental responsibilities, are less likely to advance their own educational attainment and often fail to advance beyond low-income status.
- 202 of the 1,354 children born in Orangeburg County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



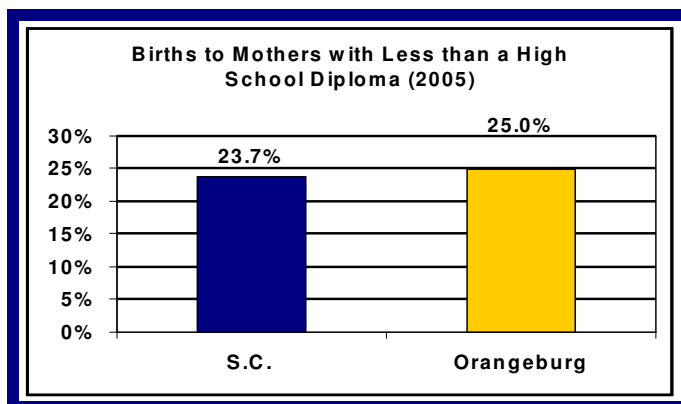
BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Orangeburg County (2005): 25.0%

Fast Fact: 1 in 4 children in Orangeburg County is born to a mother possessing less than a high school diploma. A recent statewide analysis suggests that roughly half (48%) of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.
- 338 of the 1,354 children born in Orangeburg County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.



All data provided by the SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics